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INTERNATIONAL CAMPAIGN AGAINST TRAFFIC IN DRUGS

Letter dated 3 March 1988 from the Permanent Representative of Panama  
to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a communiqué issued yesterday in Panama by Mr. Carlos A. Villalaz, Attorney-General of Panama, and I should be grateful if it could be circulated, together with this letter, as a document of the General Assembly under item 103 of the preliminary list.

(Signed) Jorge Eduardo RITTER  
Ambassador  
Permanent Representative

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\* A/43/50.

ANNEX

Communiqué from the Attorney-General of Panama issued  
on 2 March 1988

The Government of the United States of America has stated that, in 1987, the Republic of Panama did not co-operate in efforts to curb the traffic in drugs.

Since my appointment as Attorney-General of Panama, in January 1986, I have headed and personally directed, at my own risk, drug traffic control programmes in Panama and my office has handled numerous requests for co-operation from United States federal agencies and will continue to do so.

I therefore have in my possession evidence and reports demonstrating that 1987 was the most successful year of the joint operations between Panama and the United States of America, and I declare that the current attitude of the United States Government is inconceivable, incongruous and immoral.

It is inconceivable because 1987 has seen an increase in the number of arrests, seizures of cash, confiscations of drugs and chemicals and joint operations and has been a year in which the authorities of the two countries have worked together more closely than ever as a result of the personal efforts of our officials and the coming into force of the new Panamanian anti-drug law; it is incongruous because we have the proof, reports and tapes of interviews in which the United States authorities thank us for our support and request that it be continued; and it is immoral, because it is based on purely political considerations rather than on the truth - the truth being that we have been the United States' greatest ally.

At my own risk, I have headed and directed the joint operations, all of which have been successful; we have repeatedly told the United States authorities that if they want to eradicate the drug traffic they must be serious and must leave politics aside so that it does not affect the drug control programmes. However, it would appear that the attitude taken by the United States Government is designed to discourage its allies in the fight against drugs, thereby encouraging traffickers and further ruining its own youth.

I feel very sorry for the young people of the United States, since they are the ones, in the final analysis, who will suffer from the muddled thinking of their leaders; the latter are unable to separate politics from the elements which are needed in order to combat the consumption of and traffic in drugs. Politics is a circumstantial issue, whereas drugs are a lasting evil which will affect present and future generations.

It makes no sense that, because they do not know how to win the internal war which the people of the United States are waging on excessive consumption of drugs, its leaders should seek to solve the problem by telling their electorate that the entire responsibility lies with Panama, and should seek to present us as solely to blame for the evil which they have been unable to combat.

Nevertheless, the time will come one day when those leaders will be called upon to justify their behaviour towards us to their electorate, for we have been the United States' greatest ally in this war.

Despite the inconceivable, incongruous and immoral attitude of the United States Government, my country, my staff and I myself shall continue to co-operate, in the conviction that politics should not become involved in the fight against drugs, and that it is the people of the United States who, in the final analysis, will have to judge the ambivalence of their leaders.

The attitude of the United States Government is inconceivable, incongruous and immoral; we denounce it as such today and will do so in all international forums.

This statement will be dispatched today, through the diplomatic channel, to the Attorney-General of the United States of America, the Chairman of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the Chairman of the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission of the Organization of American States and the Attorneys-General and Ministers of Justice of all Latin American countries.

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